



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2007

No. 186

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OBEY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 6, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID R. OBEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord our God, down through the ages stories have grown in the retelling and legends have been handed down with little or no foundation in truth.

Many trace the icon status of Father Christmas coming from the Dutch Protestants in New Amsterdam in the American colonies as the story traveled back to England. All we truly know about St. Nicholas was his generosity and kindness toward children as a fourth century bishop in Myra, now a part of Turkey. By the ninth century his fame and devotion had spread throughout Europe. He remains

a patron saint in Greece and Russia to this day.

On this feast of St. Nicholas, we ask Your blessing upon all children. May their stories be treasured, their hopes and dreams preserved, and their innocence protected from all violence, poverty, and exploitation.

May this joyous season help all of us remember before all else, we are first Your children, Father of us all, now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

NOTICE

If the 110th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 21, 2007, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 110th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Friday, December 28, 2007, in order to permit Members to revise and extend their remarks.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT-60 or S-123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Thursday, December 27. The final issue will be dated Friday, December 28, 2007, and will be delivered on Wednesday, January 2, 2008.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster/secretary/cong_record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at <http://clerk.house.gov/forms>. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT-60.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

ROBERT A. BRADY, *Chairman*.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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H14253

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JEFFERSON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 58. Concurrent resolution welcoming First Minister Dr. Ian Paisley and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Northern Ireland to the United States.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize up to five 1-minute speeches on each side.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NBA COACH AVERY JOHNSON

(Mr. JEFFERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate one of Louisiana's favorite sons, NBA coach Avery Johnson, on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate degree from his alma mater, Southern University, at its upcoming fall commencement.

Born in New Orleans, Avery Johnson has known success at every level of basketball. In 1983 he led the St. Augustine High School Purple Knights to an undefeated season culminating with a Class 4A Louisiana State championship. He would go on to star on the Southern University Jaguars basketball team, setting NCAA Division I records for both season and career averages in assists that still stand today.

In 1988, Avery Johnson began his career in the NBA, where he would spend 16 seasons. Once again he found success with the San Antonio Spurs by taking them to their first NBA title in 1999 over the New York Knicks.

Presently, Avery Johnson serves as the head coach of the Dallas Mavericks, where his star has only continued to shine brighter. Now in his third full season as coach, he has led the Mavericks to their first Western Conference title, been named 2006 NBA Coach of the Year, and won 150 games faster than any other coach in NBA history.

Through his high achievement in sports and service to the community, Avery Johnson continues to leave a mark on the world, of which we are all very proud.

FUNDING OUR VETERANS

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, this is day 67. That's 67 days since the start of the new fiscal year and our veterans still do not have access to the increased funding provided in a bill that passed the House and Senate months ago and the President is waiting to sign.

The House-passed bill includes increased funding to improve access to medical services for all veterans, new initiatives for mental health and PTSD, increased funds for improved medical facilities and increased funding to assist homeless veterans, to name a few.

If the Democrats are acting in good faith and in the best interest of our Nation's veterans, why continue to delay this crucial funding?

The Democrats have failed in their earlier effort to use funding for our veterans as a bargaining chip for billions in unrelated spending. Why continue to delay this bill?

There are few things more important than ensuring that this Congress provides all possible benefits and health care for our veterans. I'm calling on the Speaker to move this bill forward, and I call on all Americans to contact their Representatives and tell the Democratic leadership to send a clean veterans appropriations bill to the President now.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Energy Independence and Security Act before us later today. This landmark energy bill moves our Nation forward towards a new, brighter energy future. It promotes clean homegrown energy by requiring our utilities to produce 15 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2020. It reduces our dependence on foreign oil by raising fuel efficiency standards on our cars by 40 percent. With the price of oil nearing \$100 per barrel, this will save consumers billions of dollars. And it saves energy through energy-efficiency standards and incentives like the effort I led to promote the construction of energy-efficient commercial buildings.

These policies will create new jobs and build new American industries, while reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. And it is all paid for by re-

claiming \$21 billion in taxpayer subsidies from the oil and gas industry.

I urge support of this fiscally responsible, smart new energy policy that embraces American ingenuity, innovation, and leadership and moves America forward towards a cleaner, more secure future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JONI HERSCHDE

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Joni Herschede, a true icon of Cincinnati.

Joni understood the Second Congressional District. You see, she grew up in Portsmouth in rural southern Ohio, one of eight siblings. She came to Cincinnati in the 1960s where she met and married Mark Herschede. She will always be best known for her passion and generosity to this community.

Joni never forgot her humble beginnings. Whenever Joni got behind a cause or an issue, others always followed because they knew if you didn't follow, you might as well get out of the way because she would succeed.

It is nearly impossible to find an organization in southern Ohio to which Joni did not give her time or her energy. Her son Donald said, "Mother wasn't happy unless she was doing something for someone else."

Her true passion was the University of Cincinnati. As an avid Bearcats fan, Joni's hats and outfits always proudly displayed her beloved red and black. But that passion went beyond just trappings of her clothing. It went to the philanthropy that she did for the University of Cincinnati as well.

Mr. Speaker, southern Ohio and Cincinnati will always be grateful for the kindness that Joni showed to so many and to so many organizations, the arts, the zoo, education, and her beloved Bearcats.

Joni's life should paint a path for future generations. Joni's legacy of public service will not be easily surpassed.

May she rest in peace.

THE BUSH-CHENEY ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. The Bush-Cheney energy policy has led America to a dead end, increasing dependence on imported oil and price gouging by big oil companies.

The new direction in energy policy to be considered here today puts America on a new path to energy independence and sustainability. It will be great for American consumers, saving billions at the pump; our businesses; our economy. And it will be great for the environment.

But it will be even better for millions of Americans in rural counties across